

February 10, 2003

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Judy Martz
Governor of Montana

Dear President Bush:

A drought disaster of historic proportions has had an adverse impact on our farmers and ranchers, creating a dire situation that has bled over into agriculture-related industries and our already-struggling economies as a whole.

Mike Johanns
State of Nebraska

This problem does not appear to be waning. A review of the most recent U.S. Drought Monitor shows stages of severe, extreme, and even exceptional drought in all or parts of our respective states. For some of us, it was the third consecutive year of these types of conditions. As members of the Western Governors' Association, we have been working with your administration to develop a national drought policy.

John Hoeven
State of North Dakota

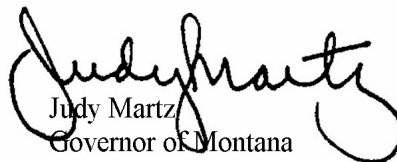
While we recognize your administration's desire to be fiscally responsible, we do not believe our states alone can shoulder the negative economic burden precipitated by the drought. Congress failed last fall to craft and pass a drought relief package acceptable to both sides of the partisan aisle.

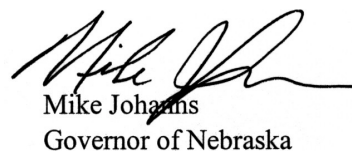
M. Michael Rounds
State of South Dakota

The critical timeliness of this issue and the current status of the omnibus package leads us to respectfully request that you support the Senate plan to fund \$3.1 billion in disaster aid through the across-the-board cuts in discretionary programs. We agree with your Administration that the aid should be directed to those who have been directly impacted by disaster.

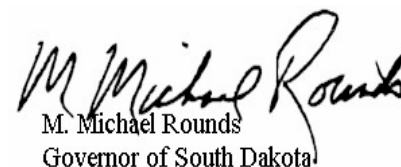
Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,


Judy Martz
Governor of Montana


Mike Johanns
Governor of Nebraska


John Hoeven
Governor of North Dakota


M. Michael Rounds
Governor of South Dakota

cc: Senator Ted Stevens
Congressman Tom DeLay
Mitch Daniels